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SUBJECT: EUFOR/MINURCAT: FRENCH PLEASED WITH TRANSITION TO
PURELY UN OPERATION

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor William Jordan, 1.4 (b/d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: France is pleased with the transition from EUFOR/MINURCAT to the UN's MINURCAT successor operation in Chad and C.A.R., MFA Chad/C.A.R. deskoff Vincent Alexandre reported on March 11. The transition was going smoothly mainly because force generation problems had been overcome. FM Bernard Kouchner plans to visit Chad on March 14-15 for ceremonies marking the transition, although he will not visit C.A.R. Alexandre warned that refugee camps in Chad may have to deal with a new influx of refugees from Sudan following the ICC indictment of Sudan's President Bashir and Sudan's expulsion of NGOs providing assistance in Darfur. He also urged donors to continue funding the DIS (Detachement Integre de Securite) component of MINURCAT. Alexandre said that current tension between Presidents Deby (Chad) and Bozize (C.A.R.) was likely based on mutual suspicion that each was not doing enough to control the rebel groups in their respective countries. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) MFA Chad/C.A.R. desk officer Vincent Alexandre on March 11 reviewed the process whereby the current EUFOR/MINURCAT operation in Chad and C.A.R. would transform into the UN's MINURCAT successor operation. Alexandre said that the transition was going about as well as one could hope and that the GOF was, so far, pleased with how this had gone. The GOF had been seriously concerned in December 2008 but Alexandre said that the force generation process had taken place smoothly, relieving many of the French concerns. He said it now appeared that Ghana and Malawi would provide forces that would allow for a smooth transition through March 15, the date for the hand-over. A unit from Togo, he said, would likely provide the 300 personnel to be stationed in C.A.R.

13. (C) European willingness to maintain forces in the field was also helping ease the transition. Mentioning a figure of 2,000 in total, Alexandre said that France, Ireland, and Poland had all agreed to keep their forces in place as the new units moved in. Moreover, many of these forces would form a part of the new MINURCAT. Others would gradually withdraw as the new MINURCAT units arrived. Alexandre noted that MINURCAT was at present short of helicopters but was actively seeking a contribution. He commented that this was to be expected as helicopters were always desired for PKOs but were in chronically short supply.

14. (C) French FM Bernard Kouchner planned to travel to Chad March 14-15 and would be present at the transition ceremonies on March 15, along with other dignitaries from countries or organizations involved in MINURCAT. Kouchner would also hold bilateral talks with the Chadians and others during the visit. Alexandre reported that Kouchner would not visit C.A.R.

¶5. (C) Regarding C.A.R., Alexandre said France was glad that the international community had included C.A.R. within the new MINURCAT's mandate. He noted that there was some skepticism about the need to continue operations in C.A.R., which France had long favored. Alexandre said that recent outbreaks of violence in C.A.R. demonstrated the need for a continued international presence there, and he said that some of the skepticism was overcome when other countries saw France's interest in including C.A.R. and that France was committed to staying militarily engaged in significant numbers in the operation as a whole.

¶6. (C) Alexandre signaled a growing fresh concern -- that potentially large numbers of new refugees would enter Chad from Sudan/Darfur, as a result of worsening conditions in Darfur resulting from Sudan's expulsion of NGOs in retaliation for the ICC indictment of President Bashir. Alexandre said that an influx of refugees could place significant new strains on MINURCAT.

¶7. (C) Alexandre said that it was very important for funding to continue for the training and deployment of the DIS (Detachement Integre de Securite) police units. He said that the trust fund established to support the DIS was approaching depletion and that new funding would soon be necessary. He hoped that donor countries would re-commit to supporting the DIS.

¶8. (C) When asked whether there seemed to be new tensions mounting between Chad's President Deby and C.A.R.'s President

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Bozize, Alexandre said he was aware of nothing specific, and he noted, gesturing with his hand, that relations between the two were like a roller-coaster. He said that a rise in tensions often indicated that one (or both) was not happy about the other's failure to control rebel groups ensconced in the other's country. Alexandre thought that such might be the case if indeed they were irritated with each other at present.

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